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TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report responds to Governing Council decision 91/7 of 25 June 1991 which invites the Administrator to report in 1993 on: (a) measures taken for the use of the technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) modality in the formulation, preparation, execution and evaluation of projects in the fifth cycle; and (b) the implementation of decision 7/1 of the High-level Committee on TCDC on the preparation of guidelines for the coordination and review of policies and procedures in the organizations of the United Nations development system concerning TCDC.

The main actions taken for increased use of TCDC have been: adoption of a programming document for 1992-1996 highlighting the UNDP strategy for TCDC; strengthening of sensitization and information activities; upgrading and expansion of the TCDC Information Referral System (INRES) computerized database; increased integration within UNDP of TCDC promotional activities; continuation of capacities and needs matching exercises to increase the use of the TCDC modality; examination of key areas of TCDC involvement; and increased support for the development of TCDC national focal points.

The fifth meeting of TCDC focal points of the United Nations development system considered proposals for draft guidelines, currently being completed, to be submitted to the April session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In June 1990, the UNDP Governing Council identified technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) as one of the six areas on which UNDP should focus in order to build and strengthen national capacities. One year later, in its decision 7/5, the High-level Committee on TCDC, at its seventh session, urged the organizations of the United Nations development system to accelerate utilization of the TCDC modality and requested the Administrator to report to the Committee at its eighth session on the implementation of this decision. The present report responds specifically to Governing Council decision 91/7 of 25 June 1991.

II. MEASURES TAKEN FOR THE USE OF TCDC

2. Special Programme Resources (SPR) Programme Document Subcategory B4, Technical cooperation among developing countries, was adopted by the Governing Council, at its special session in February 1992. The document was prepared on the basis of findings and recommendations of evaluations of key aspects of the TCDC promotional strategy and activities, as well as consultations with Governments, United Nations organizations and intergovernmental organizations and within UNDP. The programming document reflects a strategy for TCDC, the ultimate goals of which are national and collective self-reliance by developing countries and a broadening base for international technical cooperation. The more immediate objectives of the strategy are (a) the achievement of a common understanding of TCDC as a modality for implementing technical cooperation activities and of its comparative advantage; and (b) the enhanced application of the TCDC modality by institutions of developing countries and integration of the TCDC modality in national planning and in development projects. The major activities within this strategy are the following: (a) encouraging the adoption of explicit national policies on TCDC; (b) strengthening national focal points for the promotion of TCDC; (c) matching technical cooperation needs and capacities; (d) increasing the role of UNDP field offices in promoting TCDC; (e) encouraging a more active role of United Nations specialized agencies in the identification of needs and capacities in their areas of specialization; (f) increasing participation of the private sector in the exchange of technology, expertise and experiences; (g) supporting the Special Unit for TCDC in the development and dissemination of innovative approaches; and (h) expanding services provided by the computerized TCDC Information Referral System (INRES). In line with this strategy, a number of projects have been approved and their implementation has begun. It will be possible to measure more accurately the full impact of the TCDC promotional strategy as the fifth cycle progresses and as new initiatives are implemented.

3. The programming document, which is the first for TCDC activities in UNDP, also establishes a framework that articulates clearly the areas of focus, criteria and types of activities for the fifth cycle. The main thrust of UNDP support to the promotion of TCDC will be to accelerate its use and application in national programmes and projects and in those funded by UNDP. Thus far, actions taken in 1991 and 1992 for the expanded use of TCDC are as follows:

(a) A letter from the UNDP Associate Administrator was sent to all resident representatives in April 1992, highlighting the priority given to TCDC and the overall strategy for its promotion in the fifth cycle. The letter highlighted the promotional strategy and criteria for the use of SPR made available for TCDC during this cycle;

(b) Sensitization activities have been expanded, targeting Governments, the United Nations development system, IGOs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other key participants in the development process. In order to realize more cost-effective and rapid replication of sensitization with regard to the TCDC modality, a decentralized approach has been initiated with a "training of trainers" programme. Twelve individuals from developing countries have been trained to serve as resource persons for TCDC national sensitization and orientation workshops. These resource persons will be deployed in their respective regions to organize and conduct workshops at the request of Governments. Nine TCDC sensitization workshops have been held in all regions, with more planned for the future. A comprehensive Trainers' Guide for TCDC has been prepared and tested, and information kits have been made available to visiting UNDP field staff and United Nations agency staff. The regularly published magazine (Cooperation South), a newsletter (TCDC Focus) and flyers on TCDC are also serving to heighten awareness of the meaning of TCDC and the application of the modality. A comprehensive booklet and video on TCDC are now in production;

(c) Support to TCDC national focal points is being provided by convening meetings in the various regions. A meeting of focal points in the Asia and Pacific region was held at Seoul, Republic of Korea, in September 1991, followed by a meeting of counterparts in the Arab States region at Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, in August 1992 and one for countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region at Caracas, Venezuela, in September 1992. The focal points meeting for Africa will be held in early 1993 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. These meetings provide briefings on new developments affecting TCDC and provide opportunities for focal points to share their experiences, network and strengthen their role in promoting and advising on the application of TCDC;

(d) The TCDC-INRES strategy proposes wide dissemination of information on developing country capacities. TCDC-INRES currently contains detailed information on over 4,000 institutions and responds to more than 100 requests per month. Updating of the TCDC-INRES computerized database is currently under way. One of the most important activities of INRES is to upgrade the database by updating information on registered institutions and identifying and registering new ones. To this end, a campaign is under way in 35 selected countries to identify institutions for inclusion in the database and thus improve the system. To facilitate greater use, TCDC-INRES is also available in 15 locations in government offices, UNDP field offices and United Nations specialized agencies. This will make the data more readily accessible when rapid identification of developing country institutional capacities is required;

(e) Increased integration within UNDP is being carried out through the systematic involvement of the field offices, bureaux and divisions, ensuring that TCDC is given attention during preparation of advisory notes and formulation of projects and country programmes. Complementarity of efforts and resources between the promotional work of the Special Unit for TCDC and the

regional programmes has been strengthened and several projects financed from regional resources have been supported by activities financed from TCDC SPR. For example, catalytic SPR support of $80,000 for a regional workshop on urban management in Asia contributed to the formulation of a regional project in the amount of $6.5 million; another $80,000 SPR input for a workshop on intellectual property in the Asia and Pacific region will result in mobilization of $11 million in regional indicative planning figure (IPF) funding for a regional project; in Latin America, a contribution of $172,000 in SPR funds, together with $300,000 from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO), for the organization of a capacities and needs matching exercise on technologies for primary health care resulted in agreement on 8 regional programmes, 30 subregional projects and 200 bilateral agreements. There is growing and tangible evidence that the UNDP regional bureaux are ensuring that individual projects, advisory notes and country programmes give serious consideration to TCDC. For instance, they seek information on the extent to which TCDC has been considered in the submission of proposals. The Special Unit for TCDC actively participates in bureau Project Appraisal Committees (PACs), and since 1991 the Special Unit is a member of the Action Committee and the Policy Team. These bodies provide useful mechanisms for monitoring the extent of the consideration given to TCDC in the various stages of project preparation. The Division for Global and Interregional Projects reports wide use of the TCDC modality, especially in research capacity-strengthening components of projects and in developing and testing products and techniques;

(f) Capacities and needs matching exercises (formerly called TCDC programming exercises) are effective means of increasing the use of TCDC. During 1991 and 1992, capacities and needs-matching exercises were held in Argentina (food and agriculture), Chile (health), Ecuador (mining and energy), Ghana (multisectoral activities), India (food security and agriculture), Republic of Korea (electronics), Pakistan (civil aviation), the Philippines (food and agriculture), Singapore (management training) and with the Asia Pacific Coconut Community, an IGO (coconut development). In all these cases, the preparatory work, the cooperation agreements concluded and the follow-up are done by nationals and institutions of developing countries;

(g) Extensive evaluations examined key areas of TCDC where promotional efforts could be more effective. Evaluations were carried out, which covered TCDC-INRES, TCDC national focal points, TCDC capacities and needs matching exercises and the Special Unit for TCDC public information and publications activities. These exercises were aimed at making the activities more effective TCDC promotional tools. One area of focus for the fifth cycle will be the preparation of studies that concentrate on a compilation of replicable TCDC experiences, lessons learned and innovative approaches.

III. GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON TCDC

4. The Fifth Agency TCDC Focal Point Meeting of United Nations organizations was held at New York in July 1992 and was attended by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP),

the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Department for Economic and Social Development of the United Nations Secretariat (DESD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and WHO. The meeting was convened by the Special Unit for TCDC in compliance with High-level Committee decision 7/1 to prepare guidelines for the review of policies and procedures in the United Nations development system concerning TCDC.

5. A draft report on the status of policies and procedures currently in use in United Nations organizations was prepared for review by United Nations development system organizations. The meeting reviewed this draft and agreed on a set of recommendations which were later modified into draft guidelines.

6. The draft guidelines will be submitted to the Administrative Committee on Coordination for review and transmission to the next meeting of the High-level Committee for its consideration and adoption and subsequent implementation by United Nations organizations. A summary of the recommendations reflected in the guidelines follows.

(a) Policies and procedures:

(i) United Nations policies and procedures for TCDC should be reviewed on a continual basis. Policies and practices should be established which will be adopted by the United Nations system to the greatest extent possible. Agencies should have clear policy statements on how to apply TCDC. Monitoring and evaluating of activities should scrutinize the degree of utilization of TCDC;

(ii) Top management of United Nations organizations must have strong commitment to TCDC;

(iii) The primary responsibility for TCDC rests with developing country Governments, and the role of the United Nations development system is supportive. This should be pursued and advocated more forcefully than in the past;

(iv) ECOSOC decision 1992/41 of 30 July 1992, giving TCDC first consideration as the modality for implementing projects and programmes, should be actively advocated and implemented by the organizations of the system;

(b) Agency TCDC focal points:

(i) The terms of reference for TCDC agency focal points should be further defined and clarified and an attempt should made to standardize the terms of reference throughout the United Nations development system;

(ii) Focal points should be given easy access to top leadership;

(c) Training: Regular in-house orientation and sensitization on the TCDC modality should be undertaken to increase awareness and broaden involvement;

(d) Finance: Greater efforts should be made to mobilize financial resources for TCDC, including the adequate financing of the focal point units, which should have core budgets to enable them to fulfil their functions. In addition, the United Nations development system should give priority to mobilizing resources for TCDC follow-up activities, especially those activities generated by United Nations development system support;

(e) Complementarity

(i) United Nations development system organizations should continue to reinforce complementarity of efforts and resources in the promotion of TCDC;

(ii) There should be an annual meeting of TCDC focal points of the United Nations development system and regular coordination and consultation should occur among these focal points;

(f) Data and information: Information on developing countries' capacities should be circulated widely with the assistance of TCDC-INRES and other information systems. Complementary sectoral systems are also needed with the United Nations development system in order to build a comprehensive database on developing country capacities;

(g) Reporting: Information and the degree of application of TCDC should be included in progress reports to monitor the implementation of TCDC.